

Greetings from Montana:

I am writing this letter out of deep concern for the safety of some folks in Eldorado County, California and various other sites across America. To help you better understand my concern, I must tell a story of what occurred in my town, Libby, Montana. This is a story of deceit, greed, death and dying—a story that would be unbelievable except that the facts say it is truth. I am writing this with as much accuracy as I can, based on my personal effort to educate myself, consultation with experts, and first hand witness to an American tragedy; I am not a doctor or a scientist. I am a concerned American citizen with sense of duty.

Libby is a sleepy little town tucked away in the Rocky Mountains of Northwest Montana with a history of mining and logging. One of our minerals mined historically is vermiculite, a mica-like mineral that, when subjected to extreme heat, expands like popcorn. This product was used all across America as an insulation, fireproofing and agricultural product. It was this mining operation which produced our disaster.

While the mineral vermiculite presented as a desirable mineral, the ore body is contaminated with a number of mineral fiber types known as tremolite-actinolite series, amphibole (am-fib-ol) asbestos.

At this point, I must say that I hate to even use the word asbestos in describing these mineral fibers, as it understates how deadly tremolite amphiboles really are. Let me attempt to explain; there are two families of mineral fibers under the term asbestos, these are serpentine and amphibole. The word asbestos, as most commonly used, is in reference to chrysotile fiber, of the serpentine family, as it is this fiber type that is broadly used commercially. While both families are known to cause disease, recently there has been a major acknowledgement by the science community that the amphibole family contains fiber types that are far more potent in causing disease than the serpentine family. There are varying degrees of toxicity among mineral fiber types, some it seems, produce disease at much lower levels of exposure than others. Tremolite amphibole fibers are biopersistent, meaning that once these fibers become lodged in tissues, the exposed person carries them for the life of that individual and the greater the amount of fiber accumulated in a person, the greater the risk of developing disease. The route of primary concern by which these fibers enter the body is inhalation. These microscopic fibers produce inflammation of the lung tissue and, in time, migrate through the tissue to the outer lining of the lung producing scarring, eventually producing the suffocating disease, asbestosis. These toxic fibers also produce a cancer known as mesothelioma (mez-o-th-ee-lee-oma), which is a cancer of the tissues that line the inner chest and abdominal cavities—tissues which house and secure the organs within these cavities. In addition to this cancer, these fibers produce lung cancer and some studies suggest a strong probability of cancers developing in other target organs. These mineral fibers produce disease that rarely shows up in less than fifteen years after exposure and are a "thief of Golden Years."

The vermiculite mining operation, which was located approximately six miles from Libby, lasted for about seventy years and ceased operation in 1990. The State of Montana knew in 1956, that the ore body was contaminated with amphibole mineral fibers and failed to educate the people that worked there of the hazard, as well as the people in the town of Libby, which can be seen from the mountain top where the mining

operation took place. The mining companies also transported the contaminated ore to town for rail export and to be exfoliated, or "popped."

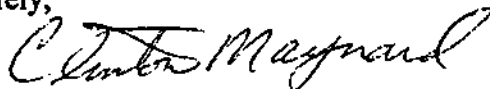
In 1980 the EPA gathered data in regard to this mining-milling operation which "should" have been alarming. This information was forwarded to Washington, D.C., where apparently it was ignored, prolonging the exposure to Libby residents. In regard to EPA's failure to protect us—in a recent investigation by the EPA's Office of the Inspector General, we have been told that EPA has a communication problem.

From a medical screening performed by the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), of over 6,000 Libby residents, it has been found that roughly 25 percent of this screened population are showing lung abnormalities as seen on x-ray. These are non-occupational exposures, excluding the miners and their household members. We have people in their 20's who have asbestos related lung abnormalities, just because they lived in Libby—we were not told of the dangers, we were given no choice. How did this happen? Because we "trusted" that our county, state and federal protective agencies were actually "doing their jobs" and apparently money was more important than peoples' lives. This amphibole mineral fiber, tremolite asbestos, produces a shortened lifespan and what would be perceived as an unpleasant dying process. While some people seem to be, for some unknown reason, resistant to it's effects, for many in our population, the future is grim.

We have been blessed with a team from EPA Region 8 who acknowledge our situation. The honesty of these good people from EPA has made great strides in rebuilding the trust that has been lost here. It is said that this is the largest man-caused environmental disaster that EPA has ever dealt with and we are in the process of being designated a National Priorities List, Superfund Site. We are encouraged that the exposure will end.

I write this letter because I've heard of Californians building and living in areas contaminated with tremolite amphibole. These folks are potentially in serious danger as studies show that even low fiber concentrations in the soil will produce dangerous levels of airborne fiber when disturbed. The devastation that we endure is a result of our blind trust and our ignorance in the past. We know today that some mineral fibers are not just asbestos, they are amphibole asbestos—deadly toxic and microscopic. The view from the former mine site is beautiful, but it is a tragic view. Remember, we did not have the benefit of being told, we were given no choice.

Sincerely,



Clinton Maynard

Area Asbestos Research Group (Grassroots Research effort)

Libby, Montana

3-28-02

cc:

EPA Administrator, Christie Whitman, c/o Daniel H. Thornton, EPA Region 4/10, Washington, D.C.

Jon A. Morgan, Director, County of El Dorado, Environmental Management Dept.

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors—Rusty Dupray, Helen Baumann, Carl Borelli,
Penny Humphreys, David Solaro

Bob Ferguson, Superintendent, El Dorado Union High School District

El Dorado Union High School District, Board of Trustees—Timothy M Cary, Lee B.
Hughes, Judy A. Morris, Mary T. Muse, Steven J. Reed, Facilities Director: Robert F.
Walker

Tom Gemma, Principal, Oak Ridge High School

Dan Ziarkowski, State Department of Toxic Substance Control

Dr. Alan Lloyd, Chairman, California Air Resources Board

Winston Hickox, Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency

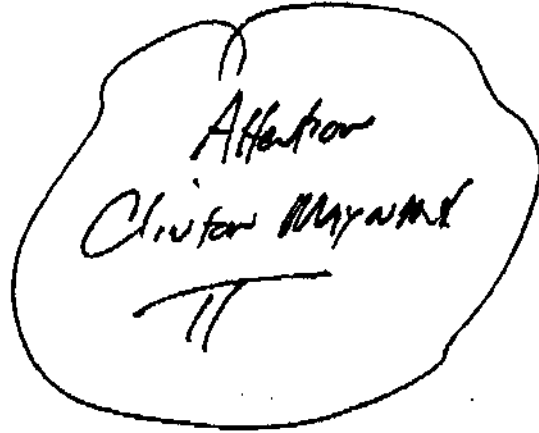
The News Media

Juno e-mail printed Wed, 10 Apr 2002 16:20:46 , page 1

From: <ttrent1@juno.com>
Subject: Fw: Re: Clinton Maynard

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Bruce W. Case" <bwc case@videotron.ca>
To: <abrahamj@upstate.edu>, <mcamus@videotron.ca>,
<lancem@directcon.net>, <ttrent1@juno.com>
Date: Wed, 10 Apr 2002 01:35:15 -0500
Subject: Re: Clinton Maynard
Message-ID: <000d01c1e059\$dffaa0a0\$6a00a8c0@p7>
References: <20020409.213917.-350885.6.trent1@juno.com>



This is really a beautiful job; please tell Mr. Maynard I said so, for what it is worth. It says everything that needs to be said, and with great elegance, if necessary sadness. I'll send a copy to Dr. McDonald, who I am sure will be similarly impressed. It would be a shame if folks in your neighborhood did not get to read this. Perhaps it could form a letter to the Sacramento Bee co-signed by "local residents" Terry and Lance? Given the fact that Mr. Maynard, like me, is likely to be considered an "outsider" by your paper of record? At the very least, the "Mountain Record". This is a hall-of-fame job...

- Bruce

Per my request for feedback on my letter to the folks in Eldorado Co. California, this letter came to me. Dr Bruce Case is a world renowned Scientist in the field of asbestos Research. His studies are referenced many times in the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Toxicological Profile for Asbestos (draft for public comments) 2000.

Clinton Maynard